

March 24, 2009

Benjamin Harwood  
Golden Gate Conservancy  
Fort Mason, Building 201  
San Francisco, CA 94123

RE: GCA - 08

Dear Mr. Harwood:

Please accept this letter from the BlueRibbon Coalition, a national trail group, as indication of our strong opposition to your 2008 Restoration Grant for almost \$1,000,000 dollars.

BRC supports restoration grants when they have a nexus to legal OHV recreation in the area. BRC also supports restoration grants that restore lands once open for legal OHV recreation that have been legally closed to motorized use via a NEPA/CEQA process or by legislation.

Since the project area has never been open for legal OHV recreation and since S.F. elected officials have not provided any legal OHV recreation (*such as a small city or county OHV park*) within their jurisdiction, BRC does not believe the proposal meets either the intent or spirit of restoration grant criteria as defined in SB742.

Also, BRC questions the grant's narrative about the need to fix "OHV damage" when the NPS website describes pollution of wetlands and "illegal poaching" as the main cause of impacts to sensitive species at this once family-owned agricultural and commercial site. Illegal OHV use is not even mentioned. (*see attached document*)

BRC thanks the Conservancy for allowing us to comment.

Sincerely,

Don Amador  
Western Representative  
BlueRibbon Coalition, Inc.  
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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Golden Gate National Recreational Area Mori Point



### Mori Point Project (10 Photos)

Endangered reptile and amphibian restoration above Pacifica

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The diminutive yet brightly colored constrictor may at first inspire glances of fear, but they soon turn to stares of wonder. The **San Francisco garter snake's** bright orange head combined with dazzling black and red stripes is impressive enough, but the belly is washed with the most delicate turquoise. Once common in small marshes on the San Francisco peninsula, the snake has been reduced to a mere handful of individuals. Due to the draining and pollution of wetlands, and illegal poaching by collectors, this beautiful reptile is now more common in zoos than it is in the wild. We hope to change that at Mori Point.

Located on a promontory just south of the city of Pacifica, the 105 acres of Mori Point are the newest acquisition of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. High up above the cold waves below, the site boasts sweeping views from Point Reyes all the way to Pedro Point. Mori's nature includes **coastal bluffs**, **coastal prairie**, and **freshwater ponds** which the snake needs to survive. The snake is a frog eater, and sticks close to the water. But when the ponds dry up in late summer the garter snake moves into upland grasslands, spending the winter in small mammal burrows.

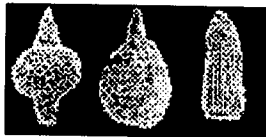
The effort to preserve Mori Point is the story of community involvement and determination. For nearly two decades, various development proposals for the area were successfully opposed by Pacifica residents and environmental organizations. Instead of a condominium, a hotel, a convention center, or a casino, the site is instead home to red-legged frogs and San Francisco garter snakes. Both of these species are protected under the Endangered Species Act. In an interesting twist of fate, the endangered garter snake's main prey item is the threatened red-legged frog. The **California red-legged frog** is the largest frog west of the continental divide, and was the feisty hero of Twain's *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. Red-legged frogs are threatened by **invasive species** such as bullfrogs, as well as by pesticide pollution.

The site is managed by the Site Stewardship Program, a community based ecological restoration program with our park's supporting association, the **Golden Gate Parks Conservancy**. The GGPC is the largest park association in the National Park System,

giving back more money to their park than any other. They also are more intimately involved in park management than any other association, working with natural and cultural resources stewardship and trail maintenance along with typical visitor center and education program duties.

Mori Point has been the site of many enterprises over the years. Originally part of the Spanish San Pedro Land grant, Spanish missionaries grew barley, corn and beans, and grazed cattle. The Mori family settled in Pacifica in the 1890s and began farming the land. By the 1920s the primary family business was the Mori Point Tavern, which became a much-loved drinking establishment through the Prohibition years. An alleged raid in 1923 resulted in the confiscation of 23,00 whiskey bottles by federal agents. In the following decades the tavern business declined, and the building eventually burned to the ground in 1966.

Since 2006 big changes have been occurring on the site including the creation of frog ponds for endangered red-legged frog habitat, and improvements to trails and visitor amenities. Invasive plants such as jubata grass have been removed, and thousands of native plants have been planted around the ponds. The Pacifica community is enjoying the site in a new way, while the word has gotten out to other park lovers that this is the new rare gem in our Golden Gate Parks.

**Did You Know?**

The ornate skeletons of Radiolaria inspired the entrance design of the Paris World Exposition in 1900.

Last Updated: March 28, 2008 at 17:29 EST